

BALTIMORE ELITE GIANTS' BASEBALL CLUB

PUBLICITY STORY

Easily the most improved team in Negro baseball is the outfit playing this year out of Baltimore under the banner of the Elite Giants.

Everywhere they have shown thus far, as a matter of fact, fans have been amazed at the change that has been wrought in the Monumental City aggregation which started like a house afire but crumbled in the waning months of the 1944 campaign. Manager Felton Snow has worked wonders with Vernon Green's former Nashvillians and it is no secret that the top teams in the Negro National League are looking into the Maryland metropolis for the team to beat in the current pennant scramble.

As his first move, Snow persuaded Wilson and General Manager Vernon Green to help him renovate the infield which last year proved so vulnerable in the crucial moments. A trade was consummated whereby the Baltimoreans took the veteran Harry Williams from the New York Black Yankees in exchange for the aging and virtually useless George Scales.

In that way, the second base spot was bolstered and a capable pivot man was placed at the disposal of the flashy Tommy Butts, whose shortstopping had suffered considerably from the necessity of trying to hold up his side of the diamond while lending assistance to the wobbly keystone position.

Next, the Elite pilot began shopping around for a young third-baseman to supply the dash of fire needed to make a well-balanced infield combination. He had Williams and Butts taking care of the center of the diamond and the brilliant fielding Wesloy (Doc) Dennis covering first.

Dennis, a second-year man, was given a capable young running mate when Snow decided on proffering the hot-corner assignment to Norman Robinson, a product of the Baltimore sandlots. Robinson, a converted outfielder, showed to be adept at handling ground balls and, since there was never any question as to his hitting proclivities, was shoved into the spot which Snow, himself, had previously held down.

The latter moved out of the line-up when he, very frankly, admitted he was not hitting the ball as he should be.

Insofar as batting is concerned, the Elite inner works is fully capable of taking care of itself. No one of the quartet is a slugger of consequence, though Robinson occasionally hits a long ball, but there are few better "clutch" hitters in the game than the reliable Williams and the colorful Butts. Dennis, in the first weeks of the league campaign, also won high regard as a "spoiler" of games worthy of notice.

As was the case in the infield, Snow felt the need for an experienced gardner, one who could rap the ball when occasion demanded. The answer was William (Wild Bill) Wright, six-foot, 200-pound slugger who had remained in California last year after a successful season in the Mexican leagues.

Wright covers the right field section for the Elites--but definitely. His presence in a garden which already boasted the speedy Henry Kimbro, long regarded kingpin of colored flychasers, and Bill Hoskins, leather-thumping left fielder of numerous past Elite teams, assures the Baltimoreans full and quality protection in this department.

As if this were not enough, Snow has on hand and ready for the shift at a moment's notice, the pleasant but dangerous Roy Campanella, he of the sturdy catching department. Campanella, one of the most worrisky hitters in the game, is kept in the line-up because of his psychological threat to opposing pitchers. As a consequence, when he is not catching, he's chasing flies alongside of Kimbro and Wright.

Second of the two Elite receivers, and one who is considered an A-1 backstopper in anybody's league is Robert (Eggie) Clarke. The diminutive but wiry Clarke is a smart receiver, boasting a powerful throwing arm and an inclination second to none in the art of handling young hurlers.

Bill Byrd, the huge righthander, and Tom Glover, string-beanish portsider, are the top-drawer flingers on a highly effective slab staff. Just a shade beneath them, though, if there is any difference in their abilities, is elongated Andy Glover.

Glover, a smart, studious fellow with a keen memory of the weaknesses of batters, thus far has proved the most effective of the Giant flingers. With a spark of color, Glover would be one of baseball's most heralded moundsmen.

Rounding out the throwing department is Archie Hinton, sensational rookie find from California, whom Manager Snow changed into a pitcher when he was having troubles in early season and has not been able to send back to his infield aspirations. Together with Hinton are the second-year Don Troy, also a West Coast product, and Frank Duncan, Jr, a brilliant young fast-baller who boasts the unusual baseball background of having Frank Duncan, Sr., manager of the Kansas City Monarchs, as his father.